

Chapter 7

Research Agenda: Research Ideas and Recommendations

ABSTRACT

We have attempted throughout this book to highlight the importance of understanding emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. We have attempted to underline the fact that these topics have direct bearing on academic librarianship, given the very nature of the profession. We have discovered that there is a dearth of literature on this topic within the profession, which seems ill-advised, given the significant individual and organizational impacts that emotion can have. However, it is not enough to promote awareness and highlight gaps; we recognize that we have an obligation to address these gaps. To that end, this chapter presents a kind of research agenda, proposing research ideas and approaches to that research intended to fill in the gaps and elucidate phenomena. Without a clearer picture of these issues, it will be much more difficult to identify and develop meaningful, effective solutions that adequately address the experiences and practices of academic librarianship. The chapter highlights specific areas of academic librarianship, profession-specific stressors, and related concepts.

INTRODUCTION

It is clear that there are many holes in the literature when it comes to academic librarianship and emotions research. The purpose of this chapter is to present ideas for possible research studies that could be undertaken in academic librarianship. It is the authors' hope that their fellow academic librarians will use these brief narratives as spring boards for future research. As we noted at the beginning of this book, this dearth of literature needs to be addressed. While this whole book is intended to highlight this lack of research, it is also meant to represent a means of adding to the research. But we believe we can go farther than that, offering ideas which other researchers could use as starting points.

These mini-research proposals, which is essentially what they are, build on concepts, observations, literature, and interpretations that we have presented and developed throughout this book. In some cases, they extend studies which have been done in non-academic settings or in other countries. In some cases, they represent topics that have not been addressed, or at least addressed adequately, in the academic librarianship literature. We recognize that we may be overlooking other possible research proposals and topics, and that the proposals that we offer here may not be fully realized in the way we have presented them. However, the idea is to provide a framework or starting point for examining different aspects of the emotional dimensions of academic librarianship, covering both public and technical services, and various aspects within the profession as a whole. These proposals also double as avenues to identifying meaningful solutions to the issues and challenges which emerge relative to the emotional dimensions of academic librarianship.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP

More granularity is needed in the research generally speaking, but one gaping hole that exists in the literature is emotions research in specific areas of academic librarianship, with the exception of bibliographic instruction. More research should be done in the emotions of BOH librarians and FOH librarians who are not primarily instruction librarians. Research should also be done to look more closely at certain components of burnout and emotional

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